Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-6, 9-20, 23-51 are pending in this application. Claims 31-51 are withdrawn from consideration. Among the remaining claims (i.e., claims 1-6, 9-20 and 23-30), claims 1, 15 and 29 are independent.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A distributed system having a server device connected with, through a communication network, a plurality of user terminal devices each having means for image-taking means, means for user status recognition and means for displaying, the server comprising:

　　　　　user presence recognition means for recognizing whether each user exists at his terminal device;

　　　　　first receiving means for receiving status information of a first user including a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user from a first one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

　　　　　second receiving means for receiving a request of a second user requesting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user from a second one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

　　　　　determining means for determining an interuser distance between the first one of the plurality of user terminal devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices based on a predetermined rule;

　　　　　processing means for ~~processing the pictorial image of the first user based on the interuser distance determined at said determining means~~ executing an image process as increasing intensity of a mosaic process or a gradation process according as the interuser distance

determined by said determining means becomes far away, wherein said processing means

decreases the intensity of the mosaic process or the gradation process when it is recognized by

said user presence recognition means that any of the users does not exist; and

transmitting means for transmitting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user

processed at said processing means to the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

2 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED):   A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein each of

said user terminal devices is set within an organization having plural places of duty, and the

interuser distance is a distance in terms of said organization.

3 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED):   A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein said

interuser distance is a physical distance between the first one of the plurality of user terminal

devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

4 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED):   A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein each of

said plurality of user terminal devices is set within a virtual space, and said interuser distance is a

distance in terms of said virtual space.

5 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein said

processing means includes filtering means for filtering the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user

based on the interuser distance.

6 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A distributed system according to claim 5, wherein said

interuser distance is determined to be smaller as [[the]] clarity of the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the

first user becomes higher.

7-10 (CANCELLED):

11 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A distributed system according to claim 1, wherein ~~said~~

~~means for user status recognition comprises means for~~ user presence recognition means

comprises input status recognition for recognizing the status of input from each user of said

plurality of user terminal devices; means for terminal operating status recognition for

recognizing the operating status of each of said plurality of user terminal devices; and means for

image recognition for recognizing the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user taken by means for

image-taking of each of said plurality of user terminal devices, and said distributed system

further comprising means for control for changing said interuser distance in accordance with user

status obtained by at least one of said means for input status recognition, said means for terminal

operating status recognition, and said means for image recognition.

12 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED): A distributed system according to claim 11, further

comprising: means for designated interuser distance input for inputting a designated interuser

distance by a user operation, wherein said means for control controls said interuser distance to

turn into said designated interuser distance when said designated interuser distance is inputted by

said means for designated interuser distance input.

13 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED): A distributed system according to claim 11, wherein said

user status recognition means is provided either for said user terminal device or said server

device.

14 (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED): A distributed system according to claim 11, wherein said

control means is provided either for said user terminal device or said server device.

15 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first

user in a distributed system having a server device connected with, through a communication

network, a plurality of user terminal devices each having means for image-taking, means for user

status recognition and means for displaying, the method comprising the following steps of:

       recognizing whether each user exists at his termial device;

       receiving status information of the first user including the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of

the first user from a first one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

       receiving a request of a second user requesting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the

first user from a second one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

       determining an interuser distance between the first one of the plurality of user

terminal devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices based on a

predetermined rule;

       ~~processing the pictorial image of the first user based on the interuser distance~~

~~determined at said determining step~~ executing an image process as increasing intensity of a

mosaic process or a gradation process according as the interuser distance determined by said

determing step becomes far away, wherein said executing step decreases the intensity of the

mosaic process or the gradation process when it is recognized by said recognizing step that any

of the users does not exist; and

       transmitting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user processed at said processing

step to the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

16 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first user in a distributed system according to claim 15, wherein each of said user terminal devices is set within an organization having plural places of duty, and the interuser distance is a distance in terms of said organization.

17 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first user in a distributed system according to claim 15, wherein said interuser distance is a physical distance between the first one of the plurality of user terminal devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

18 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first user in a distributed system according to claim 15, wherein each of said plurality of user terminal devices is set within a virtual space, and said interuser distance is a distance in terms of said virtual space.

19 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first user in a distributed system according to claim 15, wherein said processing step includes filtering step for filtering the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user based on the interuser distance.

20 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first user in a distributed system according to claim 19, wherein said interuser distance is determined to be decreased as the clarity of the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user becomes increased.

21-24 (CANCELLED):

25 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ <u>taken</u> image of a first

user in a distibuted system according to claim 15, comprising the following steps of:

  recognizing the status of input from each user of said plurality of user terminal

devices;

  recognizing the operating status of each user of said plurality of user terminal

devices;

  recognizing the ~~pictorial~~ <u>taken</u> image of the first user taken by image-taking

means of each of said plurality of user terminal devices; and

  changing said interuser distance in accordance with the user status obtained by at

least one of recognition given by the input status of each user, the operating status of each user

terminal device, and the ~~pictorial~~ <u>taken</u> image image of the first user taken by each image-taking

means.

26 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ <u>taken</u> image of a first

user in a distributed system according to claim 25, further comprising the following step of:

inputting a designated interuser distance by the user operation, wherein when said designated

interuser distance is inputted, the interuser distance between said one of user terminal devices

and said other user terminal device is controlled to be turned into said designated interuser

distance.

27 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ <u>taken</u> image of a first

user in a distributed system according to claim 25, wherein said user status recognition is given

either by said user terminal device or said server device.

28 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A method for controlling a ~~pictorial~~ taken image of a first

user in a distributed system according to claim 25, wherein said changing step is executed either

by said user terminal device or said server device.

29 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A computer readable storage medium having a program

readable by a computer for structuring a distributed system having a server device connected

with, through a communication network, a plurality of user terminal devices each having image-

taking means, user status recognition means and displaying means, wherein said program is

configured to perform:

       recognizing whether each user exists at his terminal device;

       receiving status information of the first user including the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of

the first user from a first one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

       receiving a request of a second user requesting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the

first user from a second one of the plurality of user terminal devices;

       determining an interuser distance between the first one of the plurality of user

terminal devices and the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices based on a

predetermined rule;

       ~~processing the pictorial image of the first user based on the interuser distance~~

~~determined at said determining step~~ executing an image process as increasing intensity of a

mosaic process or a gradation process according as the interuser distance determined by said

determing step becomes far away, wherein said executing step decreases the intensity of the

mosaic process or the gradation process when it is recognized by said recognizing step that any

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of the users does not exist; and

          transmitting the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the first user processed at said processing step to the second one of the plurality of user terminal devices.

30 (CURRENTLY AMENDED):   A computer readable storage medium according to claim 29, wherein said user status recognition means comprises input status recognition module for recognizing the status of input from each user of said plurality of user terminal devices; terminal operating status recognition module for recognizing the operating status of each of said plurality of user terminal devices; and image recognition module for recognizing the ~~pictorial~~ taken image of the user taken by image-taking means of each of said plurality of user terminal devices, and said program is further configured to change said interuser distance in accordance with the user status obtained by at least one of said input status recognition module, said terminal operating status recognition module, and said image recognition module.

31 (WITHDRAWN): A sever device connected with a plurality of user terminal devices through communication lines, comprising: storage medium for storing the information for designating a plurality of virtual spaces to enable a user to reside therein, and the information for designating one specific virtual space among a plurality of virtual spaces to be set by said user; signal receiving means for receiving the user information to be transmitted from one of said plurality of user terminal devices; first signal distributing means for distributing the user information received by said signal receiving means to the other user terminal devices positioned in said specific virtual space set by the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said user information; and second signal distributing means for distributing the user information

received by said signal receiving means to the other user terminal devices positioned in the

virtual space other than said specific virtual space among a plurality of virtual spaces to enable

the user of the user terminal device on the transmitted side of said user information to reside

therein.

32 (WITHDRAWN): A server device according to claim 31, wherein said second signal

distributing means distributes signals to the user terminal devices positioned in the virtual space

other than said specific virtual space after the execution of a designated conversion of the user

information received by said signal receiving means.

33 (WITHDRAWN): A server device according to claim 32, wherein said user information

contains the pictorial image data regarding the user.

34 (WITHDRAWN): A server device according to claim 33, wherein said designated conversion

is a conversion in order to curtail the amount of information of said pictorial image data.

35 (WITHDRAWN): A server device according to claim 31, wherein said user information

contains message data prepared by the user arbitrarily.

36 (WITHDRAWN): A server device according to claim 32, wherein the user of the user

terminal device on the transmitting side of said user information can designate the execution of

the converted contents of said designated conversion by said second signal distributing means.

37 (WITHDRAWN): A server device according to claim 36, wherein said designation is made

individually per virtual space other than said specific virtual space.

38 (WITHDRAWN): A user terminal device connected with a server device through

communication line, comprising: first signal transmitting means for transmitting to said server

device the information for designating one specific virtual space set by said user among a

plurality of virtual spaces for the user to reside therein; acquiring means for acquiring the user

information regarding said user; second signal transmitting means for transmitting to said server

device the user information acquired by said acquiring means; and reception display means for

receiving and displaying the other user information distributed by said server device.

39 (WITHDRAWN): A user terminal device according to claim 38, wherein said reception

display means executes the designated conversion of the user information distributed from said

server device for display in accordance with the instructions from said server device.

40 (WITHDRAWN): A virtual space system formed by a plurality of user terminal devices, and

a server device connected with said plurality of user terminal devices through communication

lines for structuring virtual spaces on a network comprising: first signal transmitting means

provided for each of the user terminal devices for transmitting to said server device the

information for designating the one specific virtual space set by said user among a plurality of

virtual spaces for enabling the corresponding user to reside therein; acquiring means provided for

each of the user terminal devices for acquiring the user information regarding the corresponding

user; second signal transmitting means provided for each of the user terminal devices for

transmitting to said server device the user information acquired by corresponding acquiring

means among said acquiring means; storage means provided for said server device to store the

information for designating a plurality of virtual spaces for a user to reside therein, and the

information for designating said specific virtual space transmitted by said first transmitting

means; signal receiving means provided for said server device to receive the user information

transmitted from said second transmitting means of said plurality of user terminal devices; first

signal distributing means provided for said server device to distribute the user information

received by said signal receiving means to the other user terminal devices positioned in said

specific virtual space set by the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said

user information; second signal distributing means provided for said server device to distribute

the user information received by said signal receiving means to the other user terminal device

positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space among a plurality of virtual

spaces for enabling the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said user

information to reside therein; and reception display means provided for each of the user terminal

devices to receive and display the other user information distributed by said first signal

distributing means or said second signal distributing means.

41 (WITHDRAWN): A virtual space system according to claim 40, wherein said second signal

distrusting means distributes to the user terminal devices positioned in the virtual space other

than said specific virtual space the user information received by said signal receiving means after

the execution of designated conversion thereof.

42 (WITHDRAWN): A method for distributing user information applicable to the server device

connected with a plurality of user terminal devices through communication lines comprising the

following steps of: storing the information to designate a plurality of virtual space for enabling

the user to reside therein, and the information to designate the specific one of said plurality of

virtual spaces set by said user; receiving signals of the user information transmitted from said

plurality of user terminal devices; distributing firstly the signals of the user information received

in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal device positioned in said designated virtual

space set by the user of the terminal device on the transmitting side of said user information; and

distributing secondly the signals of the user information received in said signal receiving step to

the other user terminal device positioned in the virtual space other than said designated virtual

space among a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling the user of the terminal device on the

transmitting side of said user information to reside therein.

43 (WITHDRAWN): A method for distributing user information according to claim 42, wherein

the designated conversion is executed in the second signal distributing step for the user

information received in said signal receiving step, and after that, the distribution is made to the

user terminal devices positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space.

44 (WITHDRAWN): A method for displaying user information applicable to the user terminal

devices connected with a server device through communication lines, comprising the following

steps of: transmitting firstly the information for designating one specific virtual space set by a

user among a plurality of virtual spaces to enable the user to reside therein; acquiring the user

information regarding said user; transmitting secondly the user information acquired in said

acquiring step to the server device; and receiving and displaying the information of other users

distributed form said server device.

45 (WITHDRAWN): A method for distributing and displaying user information applicable to a

virtual space system formed by a plurality of user terminal devices and a server device connected

with said plurality of user terminal device through communication lines for structuring virtual

spaces within a network, comprising the following: a first signal transmitting step for each

terminal device to transmit to said server device the information for designating one specific

virtual space set by a user concerned among a plurality of virtual spaces to enable the

corresponding user to reside therein; an acquiring step for each user terminal device to acquire

user information regarding the corresponding user; a second transmitting step for each user

terminal device to transmit the user information acquired in said acquiring step to said server

device; a storing step for said server device to store the information for designating a plurality of

virtual spaces to enable a user to reside therein, and the information for designating said specific

virtual space transmitted in said first signal transmitting step; a signal receiving step for said

server device to receive the user information transmitted from said plurality of user terminal

devices in said second transmitting step; a first signal distributing step for said server device to

distribute the user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal

devices positioned in said specific virtual space set by the user of the user terminal device on the

transmitting side of said user information; a second signal distributing step for said server device

to distribute the user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal

devices positioned in the virtual space other than said specific space among a plurality of virtual

spaces for enabling the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said user

information to reside therein; and a receiving and displaying step for each user terminal device to

receive and display the information of other user distributed in said first signal distributing step

or said second signal distributing step.

46 (WITHDRAWN): A method for distributing and displaying user information according to claim 45, wherein said second signal distributing step executes the designated conversion for the user information received in said signal receiving step, and after that, makes the distribution thereof to the user terminal devices positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space.

47 (WITHDRAWN): A storage medium readable by a computer for storing a method for distributing user information as a program applicable to the server device connected with a plurality of user terminal device through communication lines, wherein said method for distributing user information comprises: a storing step for storing the information for designating a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling a user to reside therein, and the information for designating the specific one virtual space set by said user among said plurality of virtual spaces; a signal receiving step to receive the user information transmitted from said plurality of user terminal devices; a first signal distributing step to distribute the user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal devices positioned in said specific virtual space set by the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said user information; and a second signal distributing step to distribute the user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal devices positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space among a plurality of virtual spaces for enabling the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said user information to reside therein.

48 (WITHDRAWN): A storage medium according to claim 47, wherein said second signal distributing step executes the designated conversion for the user information received in said

signal receiving step, and after that, the distribution thereof is made to the user terminal devices
positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space.

49 (WITHDRAWN): A storage medium readable by a computer for storing a method for
displaying user information as a program applicable to the user terminal devices connected with
a server device through communication lines, wherein said method for displaying user
information comprises: a first signal transmitting step for each user terminal device to transmit to
said server device the information for designating the specific one virtual space set by a user
concerned among a plurality of virtual space for enabling said user to reside therein; an acquiring
step for acquiring the user information regarding said user; a second signal transmitting step for
transmitting the user information acquired in said acquiring step to said server device; and a
displaying step for receiving and displaying the other user information distributed from said
server device.

50 (WITHDRAWN): A storage medium readable by a computer for storing a method for
distributing and displaying user information as a program applicable to the user terminal devices
connected with a server device through communication lines, wherein said method for
distributing and displaying user information comprises: a first signal transmitting step for
transmitting to said server device the information for designating the specific one virtual space
set by a user concerned among a plurality of virtual space for enabling said user to reside therein;
an acquiring step for each user terminal device to acquire the user information regarding said
user; a second signal transmitting step for each user terminal device to transmit to said server
device the user information acquired in said acquiring step to said server device; and a storing

step for said server device to store the information for designating a plurality of virtual spaces

enabling the user to reside therein, and the information for designating said specific virtual space

transmitted in said first signal transmitting step; a signal receiving step for said server device to

receive the user information transmitted from said plurality of user terminal devices in said

second transmitting step; a first signal distributing step for said server device to distribute the

user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal devices

positioned in said specific virtual space set by the user of user terminal device on the transmitting

side of said user information; a second signal distributing step for said server device to distribute

the user information received in said signal receiving step to the other user terminal devices

positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual space among a plurality of virtual

spaces for enabling the user of the user terminal device on the transmitting side of said user

information; and a receiving and displaying step for each terminal device to receive and display

the other user information distributed in said first signal distributing step or said second signal

distributing step.

51 (WITHDRAWN): A storage medium according to claim 50, wherein said second signal

distributing step executes the designated conversion of the other user information received in

said signal receiving step, and after that, the distribution thereof is made to the user terminal

devices positioned in the virtual space other than said specific virtual device. a displaying step

for receiving and displaying the other user information distributed from said server device.